



NEWS RELEASE

OFFICE OF THE UNITED STATES ATTORNEY
WESTERN DISTRICT OF MISSOURI

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

SPRINGFIELD, CRANE MEN INDICTED FOR FIREARMS VIOLATIONS

SPRINGFIELD, Mo. – Todd P. Graves, United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, announced that a Springfield, Mo., man and a Crane, Mo., man were indicted by a federal grand jury today, in separate and unrelated cases, for illegally possessing firearms.

* **Michael Harris**, 43, of Springfield, Mo., was charged in an indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield.

The federal indictment alleges that **Harris** was a felon in possession of a Smith and Wesson .38-caliber revolver on Sept. 6, 2004, in Vernon County, Mo. Under federal statutes, Graves explained, it is illegal for any felon to be in possession of any firearm or ammunition. **Harris** has a 1992 criminal felony conviction for burglary and arson, a 1988 criminal felony conviction for stealing, two 1980 criminal felony convictions for carrying a concealed weapon and burglary and a 1979 criminal felony conviction for burglary.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney James J. Kelleher. It was investigated by the Vernon County, Mo., Sheriff's Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

* **Mark Allen Medearis**, 39, of Crane, Mo., was charged in a three-count indictment returned by a federal grand jury in Springfield.

Count One of the federal indictment alleges that **Medearis** was an unlawful user or addict of a controlled substance in possession of a short-barreled 20-gauge shotgun and a Savage 30-06 bolt-action rifle on July 27, 2004, in Stone County, Mo. Under federal statutes, Graves explained, it is illegal for any person unlawfully addicted to and a user of an illegal controlled substance to be in possession of any firearm. The indictment alleges that **Medearis** was an illegal addict or user of methamphetamine at the time he possessed the firearm.

Count Two of the federal indictment alleges that **Medearis** possessed a 20-gauge shotgun with a barrel length of less than 18 inches that was not registered in the National Firearms Registration and Transfer Record.

Count Three of the federal indictment alleges that **Medearis** possessed the Savage 30-06 bolt-action rifle knowing that it was a stolen firearm.

This case is being prosecuted by Special Assistant U.S. Attorney Angela C. Hasty. It was investigated by the Stone County, Mo., Sheriff's Department and the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives.

Graves cautioned that the charges contained in the indictments are simply accusations and not evidence of guilt. Evidence supporting the charges must be presented to a federal trial jury, whose duty is to determine guilt or innocence.

This news release, as well as additional information about the office of the United States Attorney for the Western District of Missouri, is available on-line at

www.usdoj.gov/usao/mow